

VZCZCXYZ0001
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUCNDT #0814 2542252
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 102252Z SEP 08
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4926
INFO RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 1600
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 0583
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 6320
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 0157
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0110
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH 0007
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3361

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN NEW YORK 000814

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

IO FOR S/E CUMBER; IO/PPC-AMORRISON; DRL/IRF; DRL/MLA; P, R

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/05/2018
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KIRF](#) [KISL](#) [SP](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: 9/24 ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS MINISTERIAL MEETING

REF: A. 08 STATE 62006
[B](#). 07 STATE 171224
[C](#). 06 STATE 24218
[D](#). ANKARA 1113
[E](#). KUALA LUMPUR 775

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ALEJANDRO D. WOLFF, REASONS 1.4(B)(D)

[1](#). (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 4 below.

[2](#). (U) Ambassador Khalilzad has been invited to attend the ministerial level meeting on September 24 of the Alliance of Civilizations Group of Friends. Details about the September 24 meeting, its agenda and objections, can be found under Shared Documents on the USUN SharePoint site: <http://p.state.sbu/sites/USUN/UNGA/plenary.aspx>. The Friends intend to exchange views on the prospects of the AOC over the next five years, and receive information about two upcoming meetings -- the first Focal Points meeting in Paris on October 2-3, 2008, and the Second Forum of the AOC in Istanbul on April 2-3, 2009. The Group of Friends includes over 70 countries and a dozen intergovernmental organizations, such as the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the OIC and the Arab League.

[3](#). (C) USUN notes that Ref A instructed USUN not to attend the June 10 meeting of the AOC Group of Friends, based on reasoning connected to the Department's dissatisfaction with language in a report issued in 2006 by a Group of Experts now disbanded. Per ref B, which authorized the US Ambassador to Spain to attend the First AOC Forum in Madrid in January 2008, the US applauded the AOC's efforts to "build bridges between cultures and nations" and looked forward to "continued close cooperation" with the foreign minister of Spain in that regard. Ref B identified a US public diplomacy program which is in line with the goals of the AOC, per Secretary Rice's letter to Spanish FM contained in Ref C. USUN has been aware of high-level efforts, by former U/S for Public Diplomacy Karen Hughes and others, to try to counter the perception of US and western antagonism towards Islam and its adherents. Ref D and E outline the efforts of the newly-appointed Special Envoy to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Sada Cumber, to dispel the notion of a "clash of civilizations" with influential Muslim officials in Turkey and Malaysia, among other Islamic countries. Ref E mentions the intention of the Secretary to host an Iftar dinner in New York in September to commemorate Ramadan.

[4](#). (C) Comment and Action Request: USUN views participation in AOC Group of Friends meetings as consistent with the goal

of improving relations between the Islamic and Western worlds, which has been held out publicly as an objective. We find it hard to explain to others our unwillingness to take part in AOC discussions in light of these efforts.

Department please advise whether Ambassador Khalilzad may accept President Sampaio's invitation to attend and observe the ministerial-level meeting of the Group of Friends of the Alliance of Civilizations on September 24 on the margins of the General Assembly.

Khalilzad